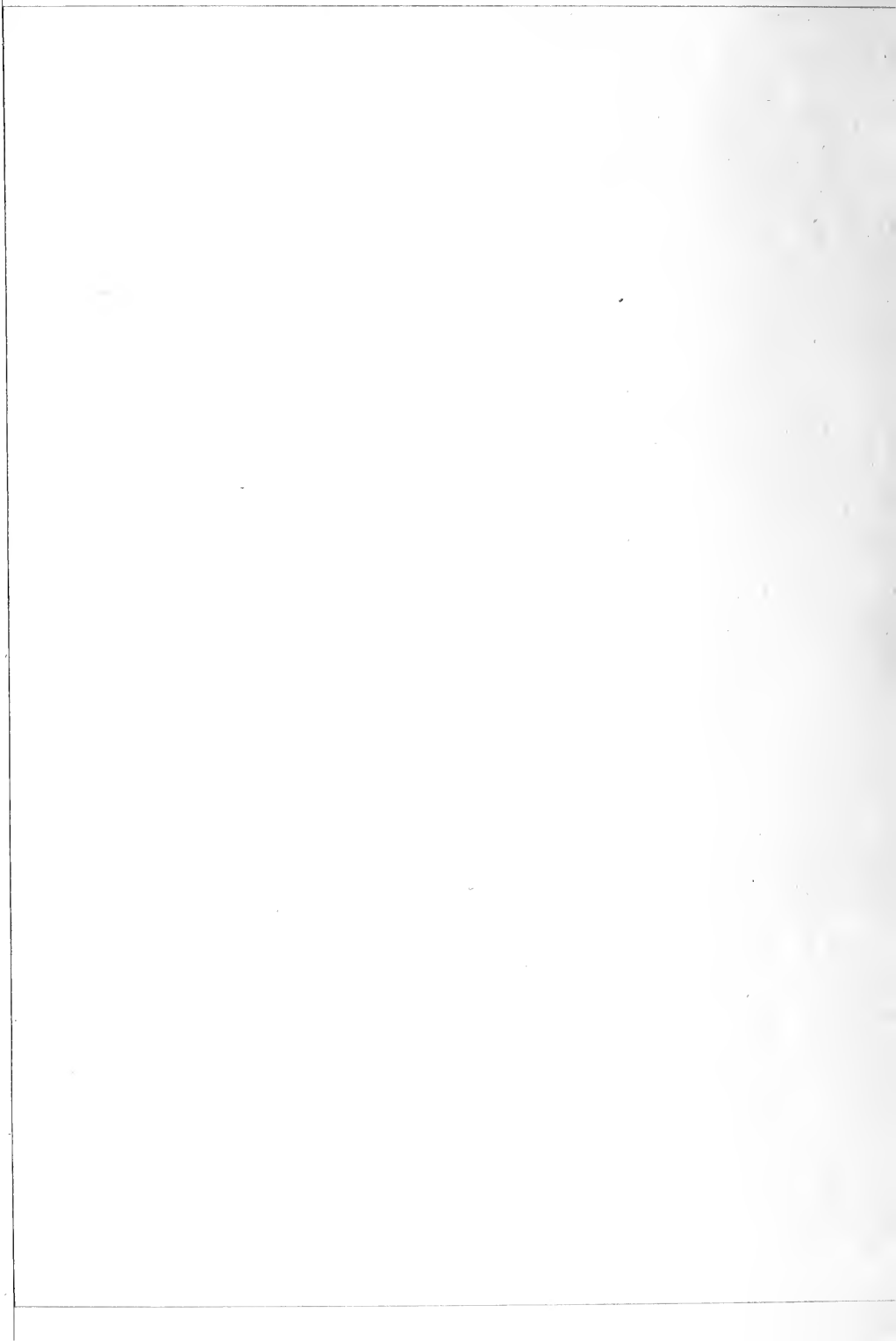


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with the Author's respects
THE CRUEL NATURE

AND

INJURIOUS EFFECTS

OF

THE FOREIGN SLAVE TRADE,

REPRESENTED IN

A LETTER,

ADDRESSED TO THE

RIGHT HON. LORD BROUGHAM AND VAUX.

By THOMAS ROBERTS,

Baptist Minister.

BRISTOL:

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Wm. Ervitt, Esq.

Aug. 2, 1857.

TO THE

RIGHT HONOURABLE LORD BROUGHAM
AND VAUX.

MY LORD,

This letter will place before you a description of the present state of the foreign slave trade, and of slavery itself as existing in Brazil and the Southern States of North America. The annihilation of this curse in every part of the world is an object which has long been deeply engraven on your heart. It is inseparable from your best feelings, and its discussion has distinguished your talents and your benevolence in and out of the Senate, both as a Statesman and a Philanthropist.

Providence has conferred on you the imperishable honour of having taken the lead in the completion of the good work of negro emancipation in the British Colonies, which the estimable Wilberforce had commenced, and for the accomplishment of which he laboured many years with unabated ardour and indefatigable toil.

This is my apology, my Lord, for presuming to address this letter to you:

When the African slave trade was made illegal by the British Legislature, it was stated by Mr. Dundas, in the House of Commons, "that but little was done by the passing of that bill, and freedom was but very partially conferred on the negroes, unless other nations would relinquish the inhuman traffic, and slavery itself be annihilated in our own colonial possessions." The people of England have recently expressed a similar opinion, and by the most persevering efforts have emancipated the British Colonies, in a manner equally distinguished by its justice to the planter, and its compassion to the slave.

When the recent bill for the liberation of the negroes in our dominions had received the royal assent, its most zealous supporters acted as if they thought slavery had universally ceased. The numerous societies organized in this kingdom to overthrow the system in our Colonies were dissolved ; and all their members (comparatively with few exceptions), conducted themselves as if they then supposed slavery either to be ended, or that it existed to so small a degree, and under such foreign sanction, as to render it intangible by British influence.

This apprehension, however, has proved to be extremely erroneous. The slave trade is carried on at present in Foreign Colonies, with ceaseless perseverance, and is increasing so far as to exceed, both in horror and in crime, this traffic even at the very period when England, united to other nations, gave it her legal sanction.

The ships of his Britannic Majesty are constantly capturing large slave vessels, each containing from three hundred to seven hundred negroes, and they are frequently destroying others, whose living cargoes have been but just previously landed. To such a degree of audacity have the slave dealers in Cuba arrived, that they have not only armed their vessels employed in this infamous trade, determined to protect it by force, but they have offered large pecuniary rewards to persons who would assassinate any of our commanders commissioned to capture the slave ships.

The failure of the commercial expedition sent from Liverpool to Africa, was caused in a very considerable degree by the zeal with which the slave trade is carried on between the people of the interior and the European dealers on the coast. Its profits are so great as to render the Chiefs indifferent to the valuable productions of that country, as articles of commerce.

From this arises nearly all the wars and bloodshed between the numerous nations on that continent. They are commenced solely with the design of obtaining prisoners, who are afterwards sold as slaves to the European dealers, and to such a degree does this

traffic engross the attention of the Africans, that the gentlemen connected with that expedition declare that it was impossible to attach the superior natives to any trade but that in human beings.

It appears that from January the 1st, 1820, to the end of the year 1834, a period of only fourteen years, *nearly one million wretched victims* were dragged from their native land and conveyed to Brazil alone. A number exceeding *the whole of the slaves liberated* in the English Colonies by *almost two hundred thousand*. In the short space of one year *fifteen thousand negroes* were imported from Africa into the Havannah, a small port in the island of Cuba. Not less than *one hundred thousand* are taken *annually* from the African coast, and conveyed to different destinations. The average number of those who die on the passage amounts to *ten out of each hundred*, so that the lives of not less than *ten thousand human beings* are *yearly* sacrificed in the vessels employed in the foreign slave trade. The average number of ships which sail *annually* from Cuba amounts to *almost fifty*, and which return with their enslaved cargoes to that island. The generality of these vessels commit piracy on the outward bound passage, plundering merchant ships, and frequently murdering the crews. In every African river where slaves can be obtained, these vessels may be constantly seen receiving and sailing with them from thence to the Cuba and Brazilian shores.

This inhuman traffic has subjected at this time upwards of *six millions* of our fellow-creatures to the most abject and cruel bondage. In the Southern States of America, the slave population is stated to be full *two millions*. A still greater number exists in the Brazils. And although I am unable to state the exact census of other places, yet as the *large island of Cuba*, together with *Martinique, Guadaloupe, Curacoa, St. Eustathius, St. Bartholomew, St. Croix, St. Thomas, Porto Rico, and the district called Surinam, on the continent of South America*, are all cultivated by slave labour, there cannot be less in these places than a *million and half*, which number is constantly

increasing by slave ships importing their large and numerous cargoes.

The horrible inhumanity connected with this infamous traffic is most revolting. Sometimes the African market is overstocked with negroes, and no ready sale for them can be obtained. Many may be refused by the European dealers on account of unsoundness. Under such circumstances, for the sake of saving the expense of maintenance, the Chief to whom the slaves belong, will order all the deformed, diseased, debilitated, maimed, or aged, to be separated from those who are healthy. He then commands them to be pinioned, chained together, and driven to the banks of the river, where a heavy weight is affixed to the necks of some, others are tied back to back, rowed into the middle of the stream, and thrown overboard, by which barbarous custom hundreds of human beings are annually murdered. The late Mr. Richard Lander, traveller in that country, resided for a considerable time near to one of the African slave markets, and was an eye witness of this brutal process.

The negroes, when purchased by the European dealers, are instantly marked with the initials of the person's name to whom they may be consigned. The letters are generally stamped on their naked breasts with a hot iron. During the voyage to Cuba, Brazil, and other places of destination, the scene of horror surpasses the utmost effort of description. It far exceeds any account of which we were accustomed to be informed at the time the English were engaged in this traffic. The vessels employed in this infernal trade are unregulated either as to size or burthen. The space allotted to the negroes in a slave ship is less than three feet in height, so that when seated they are incapable of raising their bodies to an upright posture. In this confined situation are stowed victims of all ages, and of both sexes. Men torn from their wives, women from their husbands and children, girls from their mothers, boys from their fathers, and females with infants at their breasts, all in a state of nudity, and crowded together in an immense mass of filth, corruption, and putrid air.

In a vessel that contains several hundred negroes in this state, contagious diseases frequently occur, which mercifully end the existence of many of the victims, and those on whom death has not seized, if infected are ordered to be thrown overboard, to prevent the malady spreading amongst such of them as are still in health. The men are chained in pairs, and as death is constantly occurring, living bodies are frequently found rivetted to those which are dead and putrid. In the murderous hold of a slave ship, it is no uncommon occurrence for women to be bearing children, and men to be dying by their side. The wretched slaves for want of air are constantly bathed in hot perspiration, and parched with extreme thirst, even to foaming, whilst others are in different stages of suffocation and struggling with the agonies of death. Sometimes the negroes will strangle those to whom they are chained for the sake of obtaining room to breathe. When admitted on deck for air, although they are locked in pairs, if opportunity offers, with the view of ending their sufferings, they will jump overboard and perish in the sea.

The ruffians who command these slave ships will attempt to silence the heart rending moanings, and to chase away the sullen despondency of their victims by the application of the lash to their naked bodies. When a British cruizer chases a slaver, it is no uncommon thing for the brutal captain to *throw his cargo overboard*. One of these inhuman wretches when chased, *enclosed twelve negroes in as many casks*, and threw them into the sea, to influence the British commander to slacken sail to save them, and consequently to afford the slave ship an opportunity of escaping with the rest of the cargo. Another of these miscreants, when recently captured by an English cruizer, expressed his deep regret for not having thrown all the slaves overboard, *as he was fully insured*. Surely the shrieks, and the lamentations, the groans, and the blows, the stripes, and the diseases, the suffocations, and the varied cruelties, with the wholesale murders, which are constantly occurring in slave vessels, cannot be generally known, or I should think that those Govern-

ments, which at present sanction, or at least do nothing to prevent this nefarious traffic, would be induced to annihilate it, and thus remove the sanguinary reproach from the nations over which they preside.

The slaves, who survive the voyage from Africa to the places of their destination, enter immediately on a life of the deepest suffering. The disembarkation of the negroes in South America presents a most fearful scene. Hundreds of miserable victims torn for ever from their relatives and their native shore, landed in a strange country, look around them with the greatest dread and amazement. They are then driven like beasts to the market, urged on only by the cracking of whips and severe stripes. The sale commences in the presence of planters and mine owners, when every tie of relationship is disregarded, an irrecoverable separation of the nearest kindred ensues, which is announced at the close of the sale by the last embraces, the loud wailings and piercing shrieks of those victims, who are being separated from the clinging and grasp of each other by the whips of the unfeeling drivers.

Some are purchased to labour in the mines, others to cultivate the lands. The greatness of their number, and that rapidly increasing by constant and large importations from Africa, renders the life of a slave in Brazil of little consideration to his owner. Cruelty is exercised, and injury is inflicted on the negro without limitation, so that not even the principle of self-interest, which protects the life of a beast, affords these wretched creatures any shelter from the most barbarous treatment. They are to be seen in every direction, deformed by labour, wounded and maimed by blows, scarred and lacerated with stripes, even to wounds and ulceration, diseased and emaciated with hunger or bad food, and not unfrequently expiring in agonies by the sides of the road. So tremendous is the suffering which slaves endure in Brazil, that Dr. Walsh, who, for a considerable time, filled an official situation there, has stated that the slaves to be delivered from their misery daily commit suicide to an almost incredible degree.

Their bodies may be frequently seen floating in the river, or left by the tide on the strand, without attracting any notice or exciting the least commiseration. Mothers commit infanticide, whilst others destroy their children before they are born, to save them from that horrid yoke which their parents are compelled to endure. These statements, my Lord, are not fictitious, but facts, resting on the indubitable authority of respectable witnesses, who have themselves beheld slavery in the whole of its varied stages, accompanied with all its horror, cruelty, and blood.

It is, indeed, lamentable to reflect, that such a system can be found to exist in the world, but it is indescribably infamous that this murderous traffic should be carried on to a great degree by the means of British capital. Mr. Innes, in an admirable letter to Lord Glenelg, proves the disgraceful fact. The English mercantile agents at Rio are constantly receiving goods from this country in British vessels, which they reship in a foreign slaver, whose captain or owner is authorized to barter on the African coast for human beings, from thence he returns to Brazil with his cargo to the same agents, who cause the slaves to be sold, and the profit to be paid to the merchants residing in this country. It is by no means an uncommon occurrence, for vessels cleared out from a British port professedly for South America, and, although, at the risk of the loss of insurance, to proceed from England direct to the Coast of Africa, where they barter their freight for slaves, and sail from thence with them to the very port for which the ship was at first cleared out at the English Custom-House.

The same illegal and infamous means are used to support slavery in the Southern States of North America. British capital is known to import them from the Havannah through the Texas into those States. It is true that the slave trade is made illegal by American law, but this is evaded by vessels of small size and burthen, skulking up creeks and unfrequented rivers to land their cargoes, and then driving their victims to a great distance, profess that

they are not newly imported, but are sent from one State to be sold in another. British subjects, who objected to purchase properties in our own Colonies, because they were emancipated, have recently bought estates at Porto Rico, and in the Southern parts of America, which are not only altogether cultivated by slave labour, but are constantly recruited by the slave trade.

The cruelties inflicted on the enslaved population in the *States of America* surpass, if possible, those which are endured by them in Brazil. The two following facts of horror are selected from a thousand others of equal turpitude which might be stated, and will indisputably prove, that the owners of slaves in those States can inflict any cruelties on them, even to murder in its most revolting forms, and escape either altogether with impunity, or only by enduring a punishment every way disproportionate to the heinousness of their crime.

An official document states, that an inhuman miscreant, by the name of Slater, was tried, for compelling one of his slaves to chop off the head of another of them with an axe, and then ordering the convulsed and bleeding body to be thrown into the water. This murder was committed in *the middle of the day, in the open air, in the city of Charleston*, and for which the monster was only *moderately fined*.

A venerable, opulent, and highly-respectable merchant, still residing in Bristol, was at the house of a slave-holder in America. He saw this man strike one of his negroes with the cow skin across the abdomen, which, being covered only with a very thin and half worn-out shirt, was so lacerated by the violence of the blow, as to lay open the part on which it was inflicted, so that some of the bowels of the slave protruded. The British merchant instantly remonstrated with the inhuman brute, and asked him why he so treated the negro; did he not know that the poor creature had a soul to be saved equally with the rest of mankind? The ruffian hoarsely replied, "I know he has not a soul, he is only a beast in an upright form." Whether the wounded slave died by this cruel treatment,

the merchant did not learn, but he knew that his savage master was never called to answer for his ferocious conduct.

The extensive existence of slavery in America, *a country so professedly zealous for popular freedom*, appears so great an anomaly, as to be to some persons truly inexplicable. On the most natural and universally conceded principle, however, this mystery can be explained. Extremes meet in their results, and generally produce similar effects. It is nothing uncommon to witness a ferocious democrat converted into an insufferable despot. The very men, who at the commencement of the first French revolution, were most vociferous in demanding that which they stiled "the rights of the people," soon became the most bloody tyrants after they had usurped the reins of power. The American cannot endure the sound of royalty, whilst he is charmed with the appearance of slavery. To him a King, a throne, a sceptre, are disgusting objects, but a slave ship and its cargo delight his inmost soul. He can fight for his own freedom, and when it is obtained, he will use it for the oppression of others. He will exultingly celebrate the jubilee of national liberty, and at the same time deliberately traffic in human beings. The sound of freedom is on his tongue, but the infliction of bondage reigns in his heart. Civil liberty and social happiness are frequently the objects of his praise, whilst to exist amidst scenes of misery and blood is the congenial atmosphere of his soul.

The attachment to slavery so distinguishes the generality of the inhabitants in the Southern States, that not even the importance of maintaining a consistent profession of Christianity, can induce them to abandon this horrid state of society. Not only laymen publicly professing Christian principles, *and members of large religious communities*, but *ministers of the gospel, and pastors of numerous congregations*, will openly defend and practise this detestable system. They are known to buy and sell their fellow-creatures, to procure domestic servitude and the cultivation of their land.

On the truth of the following statements, your Lordship may rely, and they will amply prove the correctness of the preceding assertion.

A Reverend Friend of mine was present at the last Baptist Annual Association, held at ——. He slept at the house of a man, who was the principal person of this community. When he retired to rest, he observed the wall of the room in which he slept, covered with pistols, cutlasses, and other destructive weapons. Being attended by a slave youth, of about seventeen years of age, he asked the lad the meaning of those arms being placed in that situation. The negro replied, "*Oh, Massa, they are to take care against we,*" meaning that these weapons were intended to keep the slaves in subjection, should they at any time become rebellious. The following morning my friend asked the owner of the house whether he was not apprehensive of danger from the rapid increase of the slave population in that place and its vicinity. He replied "That he had not any fear on that ground. The average length of slave life in Carolina, Orleans, and Georgia, did not exceed four years, which rendered a constant recruiting of the negro population indispensable in those States, so that when they appear too numerous in this neighbourhood, for the safety of ourselves, we send them to those Southern States, where they soon die away. *God in his mercy, Sir, has provided for us a safety valve.*" My friend heard shortly after this visit that the negro boy, who had been his attendant, was sent to *the safety valve* to toil away a short and wretched existence. It is passing strange that religious society could tolerate such a cold-blooded murderer, but, alas, it is to be feared that many others of the same sanguinary class were enrolled on the list of the community.

A pastor from one of the Northern States was visiting a minister in the South. On Sunday morning, and just before they were to go to the church, the owner of the house ordered a little negro boy, a slave, whose duty it was to clean the shoes, to bring them to him, when, observing they were not well polished, he beat the poor child

in a most unmerciful manner with the cow skin. The young and feeble boy, who was not more than twelve years of age, was only covered with a thin shirt and trousers, and was cut and bruised by his reverend and merciless master. The cries and shrieks of the suffering child were most piercing, and thrilled through the feelings of the northern minister, who, indignantly remonstrated with the ruffian respecting his conduct, refused to accompany him to his church, and immediately quitted this habitation of cruelty. Nevertheless a community could be found, who would listen with satisfaction to the ministry of a man, who, after boiling with rage, and having brutally scourged his little slave for a trifling fault, proceeded immediately from the scene of domestic passion, and cruelty to the sanctuary of God, to impress on the minds of his congregation the importance of imitating the lovely and perfect example of the patient and merciful Saviour of the world.

It sometimes happens, that negroes belonging to ministers of religion in the Southern States of America, become members of the community over which their masters preside. It is notorious that some of these pastors *will sell the very slaves in the course of the week*, to whom they have administered the holy sacrament on the preceding Sunday. This diabolical conduct first reached me through a talented newspaper, called "The Reformer," and printed in Birmingham. So depraved did it appear, that I refused to credit its existence, till lately meeting with a respectable and excellent minister from America, inquired of him respecting the truth of the report, when he solemnly assured me that the statement was correct. I was appalled by the reply, and shuddered at the actions of these professed ministers of religion, who after administering the emblems of the body and blood of the Redeemer to their slaves, and by that most solemn act acknowledged them to be the members of Christ, and of His body the church, could immediately traffic in their persons, and sell them to obtain such infamous gain.

Let any Christian in this country deliberately reflect on

the varied crime which this atrocious depravity involves, and he will easily believe that such "wolves in sheep clothing" would not hesitate, if opportunity offered, to purchase the very Apostles themselves, and, as Judas did, to sell the Saviour of mankind at the price of a Roman slave.

The Charlestown Courier has lately published the account of a great meeting, held in that city to defend the system of slavery in the Southern States, and in which may be read the perfidious part that the professed ministers of the gospel acted in that disgraceful assembly. The following is a quotation extracted from the paper:—"One of the most imposing assemblages of citizens, in respect of numbers, intelligence, and respectability, that we have ever witnessed, met yesterday morning, at the City Hall, to receive the report of the committee, appointed by the meeting, on the 4th instant, on the *incendiary machinations* now in progress against the peace and welfare of the Southern States. *The Clergy of all denominations attended in a body, lending their sanction to the proceedings; and aiding by their presence to the impressive character of the scene.*" The meeting closed with the following resolution:—"Resolved, that the thanks of this meeting are due to the *Reverend Gentlemen of the Clergy, in this city*, who have so promptly and so effectually responded to public sentiments, *by suspending their schools, in which the free coloured population were taught; and that this meeting deem it a patriotic action worthy of all praise, and proper to be imitated by other teachers of similar schools throughout the State.*" Such is the character of the ministers in Charlestown. The professed lights of the world, attempting to withhold its beams from their fellow-creatures—stewards of the mysteries of God, and refusing to dispense them to those for whom they were intended—teachers, endeavouring to keep men in ignorance—"candles placed under a bushel"—professing to "honour all men," and aiding to enslave them—declaring their love to the brotherhood, by subjecting them to injustice and oppression. Ye mean and putrid hypocrites, the

day is advancing when the momentary smile of the blood-thirsty slave-dealer, will prove but a wretched prelude to the eternal frown of a betrayed and insulted Saviour.

The following is an extract of the resolution, in defence of slavery, put forth by the Presbyterian Synod of South Carolina and Georgia :—"Resolved unanimously, that in the opinion of this Synod, *abolition societies and the principles on which they are founded in the United States, are inconsistent with the best interests of the slaves, the rights of the holders, and the great principles of our political institutions.*"

The following letter from a Presbyterian minister, residing at Buckingham, in Virginia, appeared in a paper called *The Richmond Enquirer*, and is so horrible as to surpass credit, were not its authenticity fully established :—

"To the Sessions of the Presbyterian Congregations within the bounds of West Hanover Presbytery. *One of the humblest of your ministers, dear Christian brethren,* begs leave to address you through a political newspaper. At the approaching stated meeting of our Presbytery, I design to offer a string of resolutions on the subject of the *treasonable and abominably wicked interference* of the Northern and Eastern fanatics, with *our political and civil rights, our property, and our domestic concerns.* I, myself, dear brethren, have no reason to doubt the perfect soundness of all my clerical brethren of this Presbytery on this subject. Now, dear brethren, I humbly express it as my earnest wish that you quit yourselves *like men.* The times rely upon it, the times demand it. If there be any *stray goat of a minister amongst us, tainted with the bloodhound principles of abolitionism, let him be ferreted out, silenced, excommunicated, and left to the public to dispose of him in other respects.* Your affectionate brother in the Lord,

"Robert N. Anderson."

"Sept. 3rd, 1835."

The meaning of this letter is, that if any minister belonging to the Hanover Presbytery should be an enemy to slavery, let him be deprived of his sacred function, and exposed to the rage of an incensed rabble, even to the

loss of his life. It is indeed astonishing that such a clerical wretch as Anderson should be allowed to minister in holy things.

"A document has recently appeared, signed by *thirteen ministers within the Baltimore annual conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, protesting against the agitation of the question of slavery, and requesting that no publications on that subject may be sent to them.*" The respectable and highly useful denomination of Methodists in England, as well as their numerous missionaries on heathen ground, who have so uniformly honoured themselves by their avowed hostility to the wicked system of slavery, will surely renounce these thirteen base traitors to the best interests of their fellow-creatures, and let them know that they are deemed by them to be the grand agents of "the unfruitful works of darkness."

At a late meeting of the Clergy of Richmond, in Virginia, the following resolutions were unanimously adopted.

"Resolved—That whilst we deem it inexpedient *for strangers from abroad to preach to our coloured population*, we consider it a part of our official duty, as resident ministers, to preach the Gospel *to servants*, and to give them *oral* instruction concerning the duties they owe to God, their masters, and to one another.

"Resolved—That *we will not patronise, nor receive any pamphlets or newspapers* of the antislavery societies, and that *we will discountenance the circulation* of all such papers in the community."

The following testimony *in favour of slavery* is issued unblushingly by the agent of the Virginia Bible Society, a popular minister named the Rev. Wm. M. Atkinson, and will forcibly exhibit the most shocking inconsistency between the Sacred Scriptures, which, as *an agent*, he circulates, and as a minister he professes to enforce on the attention of others.

"My all of property is vested in real estate *and slaves* in Virginia. I have *ten brothers and sisters*, most of them heads of families, and many other cherished and honoured relatives and friends, without an exception, *these are all*

slave holders. If then I am at all influenced by self-interest, it is impossible for me to be an abolitionist. May I not well appeal to the whole tenor of a life passed since early manhood entirely within the public view, to shield me from the imputation of such fanaticism? Not one act of that life justifies such a charge. But though I consider slavery a great evil, in nearly every light in which it can be viewed, I believe the proposed remedy to be a still greater. The diseased has but enfeebled, the bold prescription of the quack would utterly destroy."

The following extract is taken from the Washington Telegraph. "As a man, a *Christian*, and a citizen, *I believe that slavery is right*, that the condition of the slave, as it now exists in the slave-holding States, is the best existing organization of society."

These are a very few documents, my Lord, out of many which I have in my possession, and which prove how deeply-rooted is the love of slavery in the hearts of men, who, more than all the rest of mankind, ought as ministers of religion to have reprobated it both by their instructions and their practice.

The newspapers in the Southern States of America are teeming with communications from individual ministers, defending slavery, and anathemizing in the most disgusting language the friends of negro emancipation. Although the most cruel and murderous outrages have been committed in those parts during the last three months, under the influence of this detestable system, not a single testimony from any minister of religion residing there has appeared in any of the public papers expressing his aversion to its continuance.

If the enormity of crime can be estimated by the punishment which the Divine Being has annexed to it, then slave dealing is a sin of the highest magnitude. It is commanded by heaven to be visited with the same consequences which are appointed to follow the commission of murder and unnatural offences. That inspired word which condemns criminals of these classes to suffer death, expressly says, "he who stealeth a man and selleth him shall surely die." The writings of the New Testament have classified "men

stealers" with those transgressors whose crimes are the most inhuman, profligate, detestable, and injurious to society.

The public in this country will learn with astonishment and pain that, in some parts of America, may be seen the disgusting and criminal spectacle of *reverend human flesh-mongers—ministerial traders in human beings—spiritually ordained traffickers in the persons of their fellow-creatures*. That the *same characters*, who are the expositors of spiritual freedom, are the friends and supporters of unjust and infamous oppression. The advocates of Divine mercy, and the prime instruments of human cruelty. The professed ambassadors of heaven and the allies of hell. The avowed friends of the Saviour of men, and dealers in the purchase of His blood. It is impossible, my Lord, to think of the daring inconsistency of such base traitors to Christianity—such Judas-begotten disciples—such perfect conformists to that origin of all evil, who transforms himself into an angel of light to destroy the human race, without being astonished that these wretched ministers can, without the utmost confusion both of heart and countenance, ascend their pulpits and preach the contents of that holy book to others, on whose pages the reverend slave-dealers themselves are classified with murderers and such wretches as commit unnatural crime. The vocabulary of language is too faint to describe their meanness, cowardice, hypocrisy, cruelty, and flagrant guilt. The voice of all religious denominations ought to reject them from their sacred function. Let them be stripped of the gowns which they have polluted—excluded from the pulpits they have disgraced—rejected by the congregations they have deceived, and treated in every respect as the vilest foes to that blessed cause which is alone calculated to advance the highest honours of the Creator by promoting the felicity of His creatures.

It is surely impossible that religious communities in England, and who have so loudly and perseveringly protested against West India slavery could have been acquainted with the extent of the system and its vile trade

carried on amongst their kindred denominations and ministers in the Southern States of America, or they would not have constantly addressed them by the appellations of "*Dear Brethren*"—" *Dear Christian Brethren*"—" *Dear Brethren in the Lord*"—and concluded these epistles with "Yours affectionately in Christ"—"Yours in the bonds of the gospel"—"Yours in our common Lord," and such like language. I solemnly and deliberately declare that such salutations would have been sent with equal propriety to Burke and Hare, to Williams and Bishop, whose numerous murders supplied schools of anatomy with subjects, as to those ministers and churches in America who inhumanly traffic in the persons of their fellow-creatures. Their conduct is a most daring violation of every precept of the divine law, all the statutes of which are classed under the duties of supreme love to God, and the highest benevolence to man, and these commandments no sin more wickedly opposes, than the system of American slavery and its cruel trade. If a member of any Christian community in this country is known to be guilty of one flagrant act of immorality, he is immediately excommunicated, whilst gangs of savage, obdurate, unjust, base human flesh-dealers, whose traffic is as offensive to heaven as it is disgraceful to earth, foreigners to every principle of justice and humanity, are treated as if they were some of the brightest ornaments of religious society.

A public character, who has lately visited America, in a letter addressed from thence to his friends in England, when alluding to the Baptist churches in the Southern states, says "that with the exception of countenancing and practising slavery they are truly amiable." This testimony, my Lord, when examined, informs us that, with the exception of living in the commission of the highest crime, the guilt of which is equal to that of committing perpetual murder, they are excellent members of Christian society. In the course of my professional duties, I have attended many culprits to execution; many of these, with the exception of the crimes for which they suffered, were persons of amiable dispositions, but this was no recom-

mendation of them to the clemency and respect of society, they endured the consequences of their guilt, the greatness of which, in many instances, was not equal to the infamous sin of dealing in human beings.

It is true that the men who forfeited their lives to their country have broken those statutes by which the body politic is preserved, and consequently cannot form any parallel with the slave-dealing members of Christian denominations. But let it be remembered that every kind of society is bound by laws peculiar to its own constitution, whether it be a kingdom at large, or the more contracted sphere of a religious community. The trader in the persons of human beings, unfortunately, is not legally compelled in America to end his life on the gibbet, and which he very richly deserves, but he has so daringly violated every principle of Christianity that he professes, as fully to justify his exclusion from every community whose regulations are enforced by divine authority. It must not be forgotten that these slave-dealers have been frequently reproved by Christian denominations in England, for the wickedness of their conduct; these remonstrances hitherto have been altogether in vain; they not only persist in the cruel and infamous system, but unblushingly defend it, censure in the most angry and brutal language any attempt to interfere with it, and in which they *very modestly style the enslaved negroes "their property and domestic policy."*

It will scarcely be believed that some of the places of worship in the Southern States are partly supported by the labour of slaves, who have been left by will for that purpose. If the minister should not have any employment for them, he will hire them out to work for another, and after taking the price of their toil to himself, he will ascend his pulpit, and have the effrontery to tell his congregation, *that the man is cursed who gives not the hireling wages for his work. That it is a great sin to oppress them who cultivate and reap their fields, for the cries of such have ascended to the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth, and that God Almighty hates robbery for burnt-offering.*

It is certainly due to *some of the churches* in America, to notice their consistency with respect to the sin of countenancing slavery. They have publicly denounced it as an abomination of the most detestable kind. They will neither admit a minister into their pulpits nor allow any lay member of their societies to continue in their communion, who may be known to practice it, consequently they must by such regulations renounce all sacred alliance to those slave dealing characters in other religious communities, who have so unwarrantably assumed the honourable title of Christians. I would recommend to all pastors of churches in England, that for the future, when any minister from America visits this country, and although his testimonials, both to character and talent, may appear quite satisfactory, yet before he is cordially and confidentially received, let him be closely interrogated on the subject of slavery. If he be found not *merely to practice it*, but to defend or even *to approve of it*, let him be discountenanced, and published through all denominations of Christians in England, precisely on the ground and by the same method that any grossly immoral minister would be exposed, coming from another country to visit Great Britain. The teacher of religion that can *buy, sell, enslave, and oppress his fellow-creatures*, ought not to be allowed to preach that gospel which proclaims "good will to men," but ought, and that most righteously, to have "the word of truth utterly taken out of his mouth." If any minister or agent of a public benevolent institution in England be delegated to visit America in his official capacity, and he be known whilst in that country either to support or profess to approve of the system of slavery, on his return to this land let him be treated as unworthy of public confidence, as a man, whose religious principles are not established, or as a traitor, whose motives are base and impure.

Some persons after visiting America for a religious object, on their return to England, have favoured the world with a costly volume or two, describing the voyage across the Atlantic, the beauty of the scenery through which they afterwards travelled, the hospitality they experienced,

the scholars to whom they were introduced, the libraries they explored, the colleges they visited, the large congregations with which they assembled, and sometimes addressed, as well as the numerous valuable societies, which are instituted in that land of professed freedom. In these productions it is truly amusing to read, how the authors *appear to detest the slavery of America, and denounce it as the vilest of all systems ; without informing us of any pulpit, platform, or press, from which they loudly, publicly, and continually denounced it whilst there, as the disgrace of the nation, and a sin of the highest magnitude.*

In the appointment of men by religious societies in this country, who are to go and oppose the evil of slavery in America, great care should be taken that such deputies be properly qualified for their work, or much evil may ensue by the failure of their mission. Pusillanimous and pliable characters, whom threats can deter, or smiles allure from their object, are most improper instruments for the work. Men should be sent, whose constitutions are naturally courageous—whose principles are uncompromising—whose caution in the discharge of their duty would avoid running into that danger, which constitutes presumption, but whose firmness at all times would calmly but boldly meet the opposition with which they might be resisted.

But whilst I commend some of the American churches for their abhorrence of slavery ; many of these are much to be censured for the sinful feelings which they constantly and almost universally discover toward the free people of colour. These are of different shades, from such as are altogether black, to those who are so nearly white as scarcely to be otherwise recognized. No one who has not witnessed the treatment to which these people are exposed in America, would scarcely credit its description. They are avoided as if they were not human beings, or as an Englishman would shun another whom he supposed was infected with some contagious disease. These people are constantly made to feel that those social and political advantages are not

chartered to them as are universally enjoyed by the white population, nor can any redeeming quality of either property, education, intellect, talent, or patriotism, be accepted, for having the least shade of the skin. For such feeling to be displayed toward these persons, by brutal and unprincipled slave dealers, is not in the least surprising; but for members of Christian communities to discover it, not only in their general intercourse with these people, but in their churches, and even in the celebration of the Lord's supper, by the occupying of seats so separately constructed as to mark the distinction of colour, is most inconsistent with the sanctity of religion, and a lamentable degradation of the Christian character. Such arrangement in a place of worship is most revolting. It is a direct contradiction of the fact, that "God has made of one blood all the nations of the earth," and it is a gross practical violation of one of the most solemn and vital professions made by those who partake of the Eucharist, respecting their fellow communicants, "that they are members of Christ and members one of another."

When I reflect on the state of slavery in America, with its varied and disgusting results, I feel both proud and grateful that I am an Englishman, and capable of appreciating the superior excellency of the country in which I was born. A nation, which by its own united voice has removed from itself for ever the reproach of holding enslaved colonies, by a munificent payment for negro emancipation out of her own treasury. A country, which invariably presents an asylum to the sojourner and stranger, who seeks to shelter himself beneath its constitution and its laws. "It matters not (says an eloquent lawyer), in what disastrous battle a man's liberties may have been cloven down, nor what complexion incompatible with freedom, an Indian or an African sun may have burned upon him, nor on what altar of slavery the sacred rites of his freedom may have been devoted, nor with what solemnities,—the moment his foot rests on British earth, the altar and the god sink together in the dust, his soul swelling beyond the measure of his chains which burst from around him, he

stands redeemed, regenerated, and disenthralled by the irresistible genius of universal emancipation."

In vain could America attempt to use similar language respecting herself, whilst she harbours and nourishes the accursed system of slavery in any part of her dominions. She may boast of her colleges, churches, benevolent institutions, Bible and Missionary Societies, of her commerce and her wealth, with every thing besides which can promote the greatness of any country, but whilst two millions of her population are held in such bondage as subjects them to be bought and sold, like cattle in a market, her boasted constitution is deeply blemished, and, instead of its appearing excellent, by the blessings which it ought to impart to ALL who exist within its influence, it presents such an odious compound as most glaringly marks the gross inconsistency of professed liberty with the aggravated guilt of cruel and extensive slavery. As long as this detestable system is legalized in any of the American States, she will retain a blot in her national escutcheon, and present a spectacle to the world, the beauty of which is at once destroyed by a violation of all the magnificent principles of humanity and justice.

Such heterogeneous society diminishes her security by destroying the harmony of her population. If any legal attempt should be made to annihilate slavery in America, the inhabitants of the Southern States have loudly threatened the dissolution of the union. Should they madly endeavour to commit such an act of high treason against the constitution, and a conflict should ensue between the free and enslaved districts, the former would only *have to look to the negroes and the free people of colour for effective aid, in a struggle which would be to give liberty to the captive and elevation to the oppressed.* In such a case, it is not improbable but the slave-holding and ferocious tyrants of the South would attempt a massacre of the black population. Be it so. It would be better for some of these to die, than a whole nation to perish. The conflict, however, would be as

short in its duration as the victory would be permanent and glorious. If America consults her best interests, her prosperity in peace, and her security in war, let her direct her attention to the annihilation of her legalized slavery. To have a population of several millions in the very heart of her inhabited territory, *not in the possession of anything worth defending, but everything from which they groan to be delivered, suffering the deepest and most unmerited injuries, in the midst of a nation from the advantages of whose laws they are excluded*, must situate her political fabric as if a mine was formed beneath its foundations, to whose train it is only necessary to apply the match, and such an explosion would ensue as to leave not a vestige of her present constitution, except that which would be heard in the moanings of bitter repentance over the injustice of having refused to organize a state of society that would have effectually preserved the strength and harmony of her people, by the diffusion and maintenance of mutual interests, and which can never be the condition of any country where slavery is established by law and the oppressed are not permitted to go free.

Such is the unnatural treatment that the free people of colour in America constantly experience from the generality of the white population, that a revolution, by whatever means it might be effected, would not be in the least surprising. This oppressed class of society, surely, have never surveyed their united strength when reflecting on the grievous succession of injury they have endured, or they would have remembered long since, that they belong to a most important portion of the American people, who have, in common with others, shed their blood to defend, and endured taxation to support, the country, *a part only of whose inhabitants* reap the advantages which such efforts ought to have extended and secured without distinction or limitation to the whole population.

It is with the view of perpetuating this oppression that education is refused, or so sparingly afforded to the black and coloured people in America, as constantly to keep them in a

state of inferiority. Their tyrants well know that slavery and distinctions in society on account of the colour of the skin, can never long exist where instruction universally prevails. The education of the people will ever be as "the voice of one crying in the wilderness, prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God." No object is so intensely hated, and so uniformly dreaded by an American slave-dealer, as that of the schoolmaster being abroad. The tyrant "loves darkness rather than light, because his deeds are evil." But let him not imagine because the night of ignorance is long, in which he has, like his father, the Devil, been going about "seeking whom he might devour," that, therefore, the day of light and freedom will never dawn. The twilight is already passed, and the impediments to the happiness of society are visible. The most rapid advances of reformation are constantly to be observed. St. Domingo is free, and the British Colonies are emancipated. A gentleman is at Paris preparing a plan to end slavery in the French Islands, by the desire of that Government. Spain has engaged to abandon her traffic in human beings. Those European nations who at present hold enslaved colonies, are most attentively observing the operation of freedom in the British possessions, entirely with the design of imitating the noble example of negro emancipation set by our own country. The West Indian Archipelago will soon kindle such flames of liberty on the whole of its eminences as will most effectually reflect their beams throughout the States of America, whilst in the very heart of that country herself there are at this time not less than three hundred societies formed, whose persevering and unwearied efforts to destroy slavery in her territories, will continue to pursue the disgusting and murderous monster till it faints and groans, gasps its last, and expires. If America can reflect properly on the influence of such extensive and powerful efforts as these, to end slavery throughout the world, her legislature will, without delay, direct its solicitous attention to some plan for removing immediately from her dominions this detestable

system. In vain can she hope to retain it for any prolonged period, its doom is irrevocably fixed, and unless in a short time it be legally ended, it will assuredly expire by the efforts of popular tumult, violence, and blood.

If, in a contracted and insular situation, genius could arise in connection with a black skin, so as to organize a plan, and to raise a force by which the horrors of slavery have been for ever driven from his native island ; let us not despond of hearing that on an extended continent, and from amongst millions of an oppressed population, some Toussaint may shortly appear, whose combined genius, valour, and patriotism, will display themselves in the overthrow of this accursed system, and thus become the honoured instrument of promoting justice and humanity, prosperity and happiness, religion and virtue, in those places where, at present, scarcely anything exists but ignorance and crime, cruelty and blood, bondage and grief, uttered in the moans created by the sanguinary hand, and still more merciless heart of those pests of society, whose only gain is derived from a traffic in human beings.

If in America a struggle should commence between those who are so unjustly deprived of their freedom and the defenders of slavery, there is not an English heart but would wish the negroes and the people of colour speedy and entire success. All the enlightened countries in Europe would unite in congratulating this oppressed population, on the virtue which induced them to commence the conflict, and the courage by which the victory was obtained. The number of slaves in Brazil exceed the free people by the proportion of ten to one ; they would soon hear of the deliverance which their fellow-sufferers had obtained in the American States, and would immediately imitate their just and laudable example. Slavery and its trade would then nearly have ceased. Commerce would be maintained and increased in connection with justice and freedom, whilst the voice of joy and triumph would resound throughout those territories which are at present chiefly distinguished by the groans and cruelties of inhuman oppression.

If this letter should be read on the other side of the Atlantic, it is probable that it will create a reply ; and for the sake of avoiding discussion, my attention will perhaps be directed to the importance of cultivating “ a meek and quiet spirit.” Hypocrisy invariably advocates the most virtuous mental ornaments, under the professions of which it hopes to hide both its meanness and its guilt. The writer may prove a reverend dealer in human beings, some of whom may have been members of the community of which he is the criminal and polluted pastor. But should his audacity induce him to reply, let him venture on the work as soon as he pleases, I will endeavour to return him such an answer as his remonstrance may merit ; as if every line of his book were written in the blood of those negroes, whose wounds he has inflicted, whose agonies he has increased, whose labour he has stolen, whose persons he has usurped, and whose liberties he has so wickedly destroyed.

The entire removal of slavery from our own possessions affords high satisfaction to every benevolent mind. But if our efforts to end it in other parts of the world are now to cease, it is evident that we have done but little at present towards the universal destruction of the system. We have annihilated it in the British Colonies, where it existed, comparatively speaking, in a milder form, and neglected to make an end of the foreign slave trade. This regulation, therefore, has merely changed the locality of the evil, to increase it in a more horrid state in other parts of the world, by causing its victims to be forwarded altogether to Brazil and the American States, where they are treated with the greatest barbarity.

The continuance of the foreign slave trade cannot fail to inflict the deepest injury on our own emancipated islands. It is impossible for them to *compete with the Planters* in Brazil, and in the American States, whose cultivation is by means of increasing slavery. The effect of this already has been to advance the importation of foreign sugars into London and Liverpool by more than 500,000 cwt., the amount of which, in the year 1828, was only 136,999 cwt.

If this traffic be allowed to proceed, our shipping interest will soon be greatly injured. The resources of the Brazils, with its comparatively cheap and abundant produce, will before long induce the inhabitants of that fertile country, to become the carriers of their crops, as well as the cultivators of their soil.

The injury inflicted on our own colonies by the means of foreign slavery, must inevitably diminish the revenue derived from them, the amount of which, perhaps, is not generally known. I will select the year 1829 as a most disadvantageous season ever realized in our West India possessions, consequently the duties paid on their produce were less than in former or after years. *Nevertheless the sum received at that time by our Government amounted to £7,878,316 sterling.* This sum does not include *that* which was paid on importations from the Mauritius, nor *that* received on lesser articles of cultivation brought from the West Indies to this country, so that even the above return *must* be much below the amount of revenue derived from *all* the produce sent into England and Ireland, from the whole of our colonies during the same period. The sum raised in this country by the assessed taxes in 1829, was inferior by nearly £3,000,000 sterling to the amount of duties paid in the same disadvantageous year on their imported produce. The whole revenue of Great Britain in 1829 amounted to £50,786,882 sterling, so that, even at this unproductive period, the duties paid on importations from the British Colonies into this country, *were nearly equal to one-sixth part of the whole revenue received from the United Kingdom.* Such was the importance of these islands in a disadvantageous season, and when cultivated by slave labour, but still of greater value can they be made now they are emancipated, if proper protection be afforded them from the destructive effects of the slave trade.

It may be replied, that foreign colonial produce imported into England will yield its proportionate revenue. But surely it would ill comport with every principle of national justice and consistency to recruit the British

treasury from duties on produce cultivated by slavery, far more cruel and revolting than that which has cost this country twenty millions of money to annihilate. Our colonies are as much integral parts of the British Empire as the counties of the United Kingdom, and therefore are entitled to protection in common with all the other interests of the nation. We must not be silent whilst our emancipated possessions are on the verge of ruin by means of a trade, which the law of England has declared to be felony in any British subject to engage. If we encourage for the sake of revenue large importations of produce from Foreign Colonies, whose whole cultivation is by slavery, we can never clear ourselves from the guilt of participating in the sin of that detestable traffic, from which all the present depression in our islands has arisen, and of which, at present, they so justly complain. England has engaged to pay twenty millions of money to end slavery in her own dominions; she is, therefore, bound by moral consistency to attempt the annihilation of the same system throughout the world, but more especially in those parts in which by its continuance our own colonies are so materially injured.

During the late discussion in this country respecting the abolition of slavery, the West India proprietors were apprehensive *that, as soon as the negroes were liberated, the islands would be left without that commercial protection which would enable the planters to compete with the price of slave produce imported from other parts of the world into the European markets.* From the present depressed state of the English Colonies, occasioned chiefly by the vigour with which the foreign slave trade is proceeding, it is to be feared that such apprehensions will be painfully verified. But surely, my Lord, this injury ought to be prevented. As an humble individual amongst the millions, whose voices have been raised against the continuance of slavery under British sanction, and in the annihilation of which you have taken so distinguished a part, I feel myself bound by every principle of justice, humanity, and patriotism, to contribute my feeble aid to promote the future prosperity of our own emancipated islands. We cannot be

silent and witness their ruin *by the means of that inhuman system fostered in other dominions, which has cost such a sum to destroy in our own colonies.* The foreign slave trade must have an end, and until it be completely finished, such protecting duties ought to be created in favour of them, as will effectually remove all the superior advantage at present possessed by foreigners in the produce market, and which arises entirely from cheaper cultivation by slave labour.

Such measures, if promptly adopted, would soon render our colonies mines of wealth to their possessors, advantageous scenes of industry and comfort to their cultivators, immense sources of revenue to the English treasury by the importations of their abundant produce to us, and the exportations of our extensive manufactures to them. *This country, as well as the colonists, would quickly realize the great advantages of such commercial reciprocity; and those islands, situated in the midst of the Western world, would become, by their prosperity, the undeniable evidence of the superior advantages of cultivation by free labour, to those derived from a system of slavery, as well as a practical demonstration of the benefits obtained from the vigilant protection of the parent country to which they are so closely allied.* But should the foreign slave trade be continued, and our colonies remain exposed to its destructive effects, their condition will be truly deplorable. Ruin must shortly ensue; *the great and costly design of negro emancipation will be frustrated;* the black population, redeemed from slavery at an immense expense, instead of being rendered by their free condition a peaceable, united, industrious, moral, and happy peasantry, will become *by the poverty of their employers, and consequently by the indolence of themselves, gangs of lawless marauders, banditti, and pirates, whose subsistence will be procured by extensive and rapacious plunder, and whose means to obtain it will be by cruelty and murder.*

Nor would the system of education, so universally granted at present to the negroes, be any effectual barrier against such a calamitous result. However important it may be

to instruct the emancipated population, certain it is, that such an advantage when imparted, is worse than useless, if unaccompanied with that discipline, of which suitable employment, honest industry, and habituated obedience, are the essential elements. It would be perverted to the worst of purposes by a very large proportion of those to whom it may have been granted, and the education of the negroes, which ought to prove an invaluable blessing to all grades of colonial society, by the evils which it might prevent, and the advantages that it would afford, would be chiefly employed in the subversion of valuable institutions, and the entire demolition of constituted authority.

Although our endeavours to end the foreign slave trade have been great, yet such obstacles have arisen to impede our efforts, that little success has followed them, when compared with its *still* increasing extent. It has been continued for the last twelve years by a gross violation of a treaty signed in 1821, by France, Spain, Portugal, Brazil, and England, in which it was stipulated, that trading in the persons of our fellow-creatures should cease in four years from the above period. It is by this agreement not having been regarded by the foreign confederated Governments, *that under their sanction British subjects have dared to embark their capital in the slave trade.* England has repeatedly remonstrated with these nations against protecting it, and his Britannic Majesty has recently signed a second treaty with Spain in particular, that the vile traffic shall not be continued under her flag. British cruisers are numerous and successfully employed in capturing vessels, but the present extent of the trade clearly proves that these efforts, so far from destroying it, are inadequate even to check its destructive and murderous progress. The average number of slave ships taken by our cruisers *is one out of twelve*; and so profitable is the vile traffic, that a merchant engaged in it *is perfectly satisfied if he can clear two voyages out of three, as his gain on the former would then amount nearly to two hundred per cent.* Mixed commissioned

courts have been established in those places to which slave ships when captured are usually sent, and which are empowered to dispose of them with their cargoes, officers, and crew, according to law. The vessel is condemned and sold, *whilst probably the purchaser is an agent for the owner from whom she has been taken, or for some similar miscreant who sends her again to the coast of Africa in the same illegal trade.* The officers and crew are sentenced to imprisonment, *from which the captain immediately liberates himself for three or four doubloons, the mates for a less sum, and the foremast men for a few dollars each.* The negroes removed from the captured ship are ordered to be apprenticed for a short time, to qualify them for *free colonial cultivation, but it is notorious that they are invariably driven into the interior of the country, and re-sold for slaves.* The English people are delighted with the efforts of our Government to end this inhuman trade, and read with ecstasy the success of our naval commanders commissioned to prevent it, *whilst the dealer in human beings laughs at the mummery, and proceeds undismayed in his cruel career.*

Ineffectual hitherto as all the means have proved to destroy the slave trade, and difficult as the accomplishment of so desirable an object may still appear, *there are measures yet untried, which if enforced would quickly annihilate this base traffic.* It ought to be declared *piracy by the united consent of all nations,* and every slave vessel as such should be liable to be seized by the ships of every country commissioned for the purpose. Tribunals, consisting of *upright and decisive judges,* should be appointed at convenient localities, to which the piratical officers and crew should be sent for trial, and when convicted *not any consideration should prevent their execution within twenty-four hours after condemnation,* the same time which the law of England allows a murderer to live after he has received sentence of death. The operation of this law would probably in some instances induce the crew of a slave ship to fight most desperately, rather than submit to be taken as pirates, knowing that whether they resisted and a capture ensued,

or yielded without any struggle, death in either case would be their inevitable portion. Under these circumstances a *proper distinction* might mark *the aggravated crime of resistance*. The commanders of our cruizers should be instructed to receive the negroes on board of his Majesty's ship, *and immediately to execute summary justice by sinking the piratical vessel with her officers and crew, not allowing any of them to escape*. If it should appear incompatible with either room, health, or safety, to take the slaves on board of the cruizer, and the preservation of the vessel in which they were taken be necessary for the conveyance of them to their legal destination, *the commissioned commander should then be directed to execute the pirates at the yard-arm of his Majesty's ship as early as possible after their capture*. Every Government forming a party to the treaty that declares the slave trade to be *piracy*, should be required to commission its proportionate number of ships to prevent the traffic, and these should sail under similar orders to those delivered to British cruizers. Suitable pay and prize remuneration ought to be allowed to our officers and men if successful, to excite their diligence and activity in the service. *The owners of slave ships, and such merchants as embark their capital in the detestable trade, should when detected be held accountable for their conduct*. At present these guilty adventurers are exposed only to trifling consequences. The wretch in Cuba who charts his vessel in this traffic, if she be captured, never suffers more punishment than the condemnation of her in a mixed commissioned court. The capital embarked in this horrid trade by a British merchant, subjects him merely to a small diminution of property by the loss of his cargo if the vessel be seized, *and this is the only consequence* which at present is attached to his infamous speculation. This is too painful for reflection, and difficult to be mentioned without feeling the warmest indignation at such palpable injustice. A man who in this country is detected in smuggling a gallon of spirituous liquors is fined £100 for the offence, and if incapable to pay the money he is sent either to prison and hard labour, or to

serve in the navy for five years. Numerous criminals in England have been executed or transported for life for stealing a few trinkets in a dwelling-house, or for the forgery of a pound note; whilst gangs of cold-blooded mercantile miscreants are permitted with little interruption to charter vessels and embark capital in a trade *which annually consigns not less than one hundred thousand of our fellow-creatures to the horrors of perpetual slavery, and in which traffic cruelties beyond imagination are inflicted, wholesale murders are constantly committed to the frightful and yearly number of almost ten thousand victims, and whose only crime is the colour of their skin.* For such atrocities both the *ship-owner* and the *merchant*, who are the *prime cause* of all the evil, if the vessel be captured, suffer only a trifling diminution of their basely applied property. There is not an Englishman, my Lord, who deserves the name, when reflecting on such glaring injustice, but would cry shame, shame on a legislature that would consign a poor wretch to the gibbet for forging the sum of twenty shillings, and allow a British mercantile miscreant, who is steeped up to the lip in villainy, cruelty, and murder, *to escape with a trifling punishment.*

It may be replied that the law of England has made it a capital felony for any of her subjects to engage in the slave trade. But this only relates to the prevention of fitting out vessels for the purpose in British ports, and to criminate subjects of this country who may be captured in them at sea. This regulation is ineffectual to deter the English merchant from engaging in the trade under foreign authority, because it leaves the cruel adventurer himself unmolested. A law could be made, and that with general concurrence, which would most effectually prevent this traffic being carried on by British subjects under any sanction. Attach the consequences of piracy equally to the English slave merchant ashore, as to the captain and crew of his vessel if captured at sea. If he be detected and found guilty by the verdict of a jury of employing his capital in the foreign slave trade, let the infamous culprit expiate

his crime by the forfeiture of his life to that country and its laws which he has both disgraced and violated by trading in human beings. And whatever might be his property, his influence, his connections, or his general character at the time of his condemnation, *not one of these considerations, nor all of them united, should be permitted to avert his fate. The punishment ought to be as certain as the conviction was clear. He is an accessory to slave dealing and murder before the fact, and he should end his existence by an ignominious death.* If such measures were adopted the English slave merchants would soon learn that the law to prevent the cruel trade was not a scare-crow, or useless threats, merely intended *to deter from crime*, but a forcible *statute*, to visit it with appropriate punishment. They would not, as they do at present, laugh at the folly of the efforts employed to annihilate the inhuman traffic; nor would society at large find it difficult to state in which the weakness most predominates, the law, which is inadequate to prevent this gross crime, or the legislature, which is indifferent to its infamous progression.

To render effective these means to end the foreign slave trade, a powerful association should be formed in this country, whose object should be to watch its movements and announce them to the world, likewise to press for the execution of the laws against British subjects who in any form may be found to be engaged in the traffic. This society should have its agents and correspondents in every part of the world where negro slavery exists, and by whose constant communications to England, the objects of such a laudable combination would be essentially facilitated. If your Lordship would become its president, multitudes in the United Kingdom, who combine property, intelligence, influence, and every virtue that can ornament character, would enroll themselves as members of such an association. When its benevolent intentions should be effected, and slavery, the disgrace of nations, be ended, you would then have the invaluable consolation of having been one of the greatest benefactors to the most miserable and defenceless part of the human race. On the memory of

posterity your philanthropy would be engraven more imperishable than the skill of the artist could record it either in brass or in marble. And the future historian would connect your name with the most important and successful exertions to impart freedom and happiness to a large proportion of the family of man, who are at present, by means of the foreign slave trade, and the system it supports, rendered the most wretched beings on the surface of the globe.

If Spain be determined to fulfil the treaty into which she has recently entered with England not to sanction the slave trade, and issue such orders to her colonies, it is possible that Cuba, the great depôt of African slaves, from whence they are sent to Brazil and the American States, may refuse to obey the regulations. In this case, if the Parent Country should appear incapable to reduce this large island to its allegiance, the British legislature could easily and effectually assist her, by commissioning a few of those immense machines which at present float in the harbours of Portsmouth and Plymouth, to destroy the fort at the entrance of the Havannah. These are well educated, and can speak a language that all nations can perfectly comprehend. And after cruising for a short time, or remaining at anchor in the immediate vicinity of the island; its resistance would not only be quickly and completely ended, but the success of the combined efforts of Spain and England, to destroy this traffic in human beings, *would immediately announce, both to Brazil and the American States, that the days of their slavery were numbered.* If these means be employed to end the foreign slave trade, we should have to complain of its continuance but for a very short time. It would almost instantly vanish; and instead of England continuing to enter into useless treaties, and being burdened with the heavy expense of commissioning ships to prevent its progress, we should only have to reflect on ourselves for not having acted more promptly in destroying this traffic by the instrumentality we had in our power to use, and which when tried produced the desired effect.

If objections be raised against these measures on account

of their apparent severity, such persons should *transfer their feelings to the murderous hold of a slave ship, to the foreign markets in which the victims are sold, and to the mines in which they are doomed to labour. Let them survey the whole process of cruelty inflicted on millions of their fellow-creatures, from their embarkation on the African coast, to the end of their short but suffering existence.* Let them remember that the prosperity or ruin of eight hundred thousand negroes, emancipated in the British colonies, is involved in the continuance or destruction of the foreign slave trade. And let them not forget that other nations are vigilantly observing the effect of emancipation in the British islands, the operation of which will determine the future policy of these Governments respecting the continuance or removal of slavery from their own colonies. The natural result of these reflections will justify this country in the use of such means as have been proposed to end the slave trade. There is a kind of philanthropy, my Lord, discovered at the present day, in the justice or compassion of which I am not desirous to participate. *Its relations are entirely to the culprit who suffers for his guilt, without the least commiseration for those who have been the unmerited victims of his crime.* It can weep most copiously at the sight of an inhuman monster enduring the consequence of his heinous offences against society, whilst there is not the least expression of sympathy for those on whom his conduct has inflicted the heaviest bereavement and most irreparable injury.

In whatever light you consider the traffic in slaves, it presents a more extensive violation of every moral principle than any other crime. If love to God and our neighbour are the two commandments which imply all the other precepts of the Decalogue, then the slave trade must be as insulting to the Creator as it is injurious to His creature. It tramples, ruins, and destroys the very being who was formed in the image of Him that made him, and consequently must be actuated by every principle that is equally hostile to the claims of Deity and the interests of the human race. If there is any connection to be observed

between the divine administration and the punishment of crime in this world, then the enormity of varied guilt which this depraved traffic involves will certainly be visited by the hand of Providence on those who not only practise it, but on such as support it, either by an indifference to its existence whilst they have it in their power to destroy it, or by the enactment of laws to perpetuate its continuance.

Such is the influence of the slave trade and the system it continues to support, that, in whatever country it exists, its demoralizing effects are not confined to the wretched victims of this oppression. The general habits of a large proportion of the free people, from the lowest even to the highest grades in society, are ignorant and tyrannical, vicious and cruel, intemperate and blasphemous, dishonest and debauched. The very sources of justice are polluted amongst them, and the law itself is perverted to the worst of purposes. The professional practise of it, and especially as it relates either to the protection or recovery of property, is almost entirely used as a scheme of protraction and intrigue, of deception and fraud. We need no further evidence of the correctness of this assertion, than that which every country can supply where the slave trade is encouraged to recruit and strengthen its kindred system. An Englishman accustomed to good society in his native land, if passing through South Carolina, Orleans, or Georgia, would be forcibly struck with the encrusted ignorance, the ferocity of countenance, the malevolent grin, the brutal manners, the violent tempers, the revengeful dispositions, and the cruel demeanour of the generality of slave-dealers, whilst the numerous duels and frequent assassinations, either by the avengers or their hired substitutes to perform them, abundantly prove the little value they attach, not merely to the life of a negro, but to the existence of one another. At so low an ebb is commercial integrity in these enslaved American States, that in whatever mercantile circle you move in Great Britain that may have transactions with them, you are constantly and universally hearing complaints respecting the almost total deficiency of their moral principle, which is essen-

tial to render trade respectable and confidential, honourable and safe.

Nor is there any difficulty to trace this mean and fraudulent propensity to its real source. The people amongst whom little else distinguishes society but slave dealing and oppression, cruelty and blood, with which they are constantly familiarized, as in some of the American States, have no hesitation in departing from the easy and mild, the reasonable and straight forward regulations of commercial equity. The man who can buy and sell his fellow-creature without any remorse, will, if opportunity offers, defraud his mercantile correspondent. All the barriers that conscience can erect against injustice and fraud, are completely levelled and destroyed by a participation in this morally injurious traffic, and consequently the slave-dealer is prepared to commit any dishonesty by which he can advance his own interest, and at the same time escape with impunity.

If the morality of a country may be estimated by the kind of punishment which it inflicts on offenders against the law, then the following statement of the execution of a slave in Georgia for killing his master, will be most amply sufficient of itself to prove the truth of the demoralizing effects of slavery in the American States. Instead of depriving the negro of life in the same manner as it would be taken from any other murderer, he was made to expire by a mode of dreadful and protracted torture. A strong stake was driven firmly into the ground, to which one end of a chain a few yards in length was united, whilst the other end of it was rivetted around the body of the criminal—thus permitting him to move around the stake in a circle whose diameter would be twice the length of the chain. At a short distance from the extent of the circle a tremendous fire was kindled around it, not sufficiently close to the negro to burn him instantly to death, and thus rapidly to end his sufferings, but allowing such a space between him and the fire, as gradually to roast him till he expired, and afterwards to consume his body in the flames. The tortured man sometimes ran with great rapidity around the

circle, as if fleeing from the heat ; at other times he clung closely to the stake in the centre, that he might be at a distance from the flame ; he frequently leaped as high as the length of his chain would allow him, and then endeavoured to descend violently head foremost to the ground, with the intention of escaping his torture by immediately ending his life. Had the criminal been a free man this mode of execution would not have been adopted, the barbarity of which was entirely intended to defend the system of slavery and the persons who practised it, by deterring the negroes from similar acts of violence against their masters, however tyrannical and cruel. Of what materials that society must be composed which could require such horrible means to preserve it, no one will have any difficulty to form a correct opinion, and will not only believe in the existence of all its stated and accumulated guilt, but will join both heart and hand to destroy the base system under which it exists, as the great source of all the varied depravity it presents. If the truth of this brutal and barbarous execution be questioned, every doubt will be removed when it is known to depend on the testimony of a gentleman, a resident in Bristol, whose name in the estimation of all his fellow-citizens is inseparable from the highest veracity, integrity, and honour, and who himself was in Georgia at the time this disgraceful and inhuman punishment was inflicted.

In concluding this Letter, my Lord, I cannot but express my unshaken conviction that slavery is rapidly approaching its end. In the Brazils and American States it must shortly expire, and if strong measures be adopted to destroy the traffic in human beings, very much will be done to accelerate the overthrow of the system in these countries to which it has given birth, and where it still continues to impart strength. Slavery can never exist very long if deprived of the aid of its kindred trade. The fountain being exhausted, the stream must naturally fail, and although it may linger for a short time after the traffic is ended, it must rapidly expire ; and those lands, which have been brutalized and cursed with its diabolical influ-

ence, will flourish under the dominion of those just and profitable principles which have rendered England the terror of despots, the envy of other nations, and the boast of every man who has perception adequate to appreciate her invaluable advantages, and gratitude sufficient to acknowledge her incomparable blessings.

I have the honour to be, my Lord,

Your Lordship's obedient humble Servant,

THOMAS ROBERTS.

Bristol, Feb. 24, 1836.

